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NATIONAL HOUSE,
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THE POLYNESIAN.

HISTORY OF THE MEXICAN WAR.

We are enabled to present our readers a brief sketch of the military operations in Mexico since the commencement of hostilities to the capture of the Mexican capital by the American army under Gen. Scott. It is not our purpose to discuss the justice of the war, but merely to present as concise a statement of the battles as the information in our possession will enable us to do. We glean the intelligence from official accounts received per Sarcelle. The confused mass of papers received renders the task of compiling a concise account of the matters a laborious one; but as the accounts heretofore published have been rather disjointed, we feel assured our readers will peruse the following brief history with interest.

The Congress of the United States, in March, 1845, passed resolutions proposing terms for the admission of Texas, then a foreign independent nation, to the Union as one of the states of that republic. The people of Texas called a convention for the express purpose, and accepted of these terms on the 4th of July of the same year.

At the subsequent session of Congress, which met in December, 1845, the Texan Senators and Representatives took their seats in that body, the laws of the United States were extended over the state of Texas, and the annexation fully completed.

On the other hand, Mexico claimed Texas as a department of her government, and as much subject to her authority as the departments of Tamaulipas and Vera Cruz.

The Mexican Minister at Washington, Gen. Almonte, on the 6th of March, 1845, immediately after the resolution of Congress proposing terms for the annexation of Texas had been signed by the President, protested against this measure as "an act of aggression, the most unjust that can be found recorded in the annals of modern history; namely, that of despoiling a friendly nation, like Mexico, of a considerable portion of her territory;" and protesting against the resolution of annexation, as being an act "whereby the province of Texas, an integral portion of the Mexican territory, is agreed and admitted into the American Union;" he announced that, as a consequence, his mission to the United States had terminated, and demanded his passports. These were granted, and he immediately retired from Washington to New York, whence he soon returned to Mexico.

The Mexican nation, on learning of the resolutions of annexation by the United States Congress, seems to have at once regarded itself as at war with that country.

In consequence of this state of things, the President of the United States, on the 23rd of May, 1845, ordered General Taylor to move from Fort Jesup, with the forces under his command, and to place himself in a position to act efficiently in defence of Texas, should his aid be needed, but not to enter that territory. At the same time a naval force under Commodore Connor was dispatched to the Gulf of Mexico with a view to the defence of Texas.

Mexico had not in theory ceased to be at war with Texas, and was perpetually talking of regaining the "rebellious department."—Accordingly when Texas became one of the states of the American Union the hostility and theoretical war of Mexico became transferred to the United States. Mexico still claimed Texas as her own, and of course any overt act of hostility to regain it would be directed against the American republic. Arista in the north remaining inactive, and Herrera seeming disposed to receive a minister—Mr. Slidell, from the United States—he was overthrown in December, 1845, by Paredes, who breathed fiercer denunciation against the states of the north, and who would not receive the American minister. Paredes and his government were actually in a state of war towards the United States. Accordingly the Mexican army of the north was put in a state of preparation to move forward to Matamoros.

The administration at Washington, on the 13th of January, 1846, ordered General Taylor to move forward and occupy the east bank of the Rio Grande opposite Matamoros, but not disturb any of the Mexican settlements, or any military posts that might be on that side of the Rio Grande, and to purchase every thing needed for the army at the highest price.

Matamoros is the capital of the department of Tamaulipas, and contained about seven thousand inhabitants. At the time of the arrival of General Taylor about two thousand troops were stationed there under General Mejia, and reinforcements under Ampudia were expected soon to arrive. Taylor's force was about two thousand three hundred. His presence created great excitement in Matamoros, and caused a display of great activity among the Mexican troops, whose attitude was decidedly hostile.

The American General now commenced fortifying his position, and by the 8th of April a small field work, mounting four eigh-

teen-pounders, had been completed; and at the same time, a field-work of six bastion fronts, sufficient to hold five regiments, was in a rapid state of progress.

On the 11th of April General Ampudia, with one thousand cavalry and fifteen hundred infantry, arrived at Matamoros, and assumed the chief command.

In the afternoon of the same day he forwarded a communication to Gen. Taylor, commanding him to break up camp and retire to the other bank of the river Neuces, threatening him with an appeal to arms if he remained. To this Gen. Taylor replied that the orders under which he acted would not allow him to retrograde.

Immediately on receiving the above communication from the Mexican general, Taylor began to place his troops in a position to receive the threatened attack.

Though the enemy did not seem inclined to make good his implied threat of driving the Americans from their position, yet Taylor regarding this communication as a declaration of war, began to govern his conduct according to the laws of war. Accordingly on the 17th of April he blockaded the Rio Grande, driving out of the river the Mexican schooner Juniata, which was driven to sea in a gale, and ordered back to New Orleans two American schooners which were off the mouth of the river, all of which were supposed to be laden with provisions and military stores for the Mexicans. This was an act of war; indeed, the presence of two hostile armies on opposite banks of the river was incompatible with a state of peace.

On the 20th of April, General Arista, the general-in-chief of the army of the north arrived with reinforcements, and assumed the chief command of the Mexican forces at Matamoros, which must now have been about seven thousand strong. The army of Gen. Taylor was not strengthened, though he had written on the second day of his arrival at this position, to the war department at Washington, calling its "attention to the necessity of speedily sending recruits to his army."

Some slight skirmishing preceded the actual commencement of hostilities, and on the evening of the 29th, Capt. Walker of the Texan Rangers arrived with a message from Major Munroe that Point Isabel was surrounded by the enemy and in danger. Point Isabel, about twenty-seven miles from Matamoros, is situated on the Gulf of Mexico, and was the depot of provisions and military stores for the American army. Capt. Walker brought intelligence that teams which had started from Point Isabel for General Taylor had been driven back by the enemy, and that on the 25th, while out reconnoitering with a small force of rangers in order to cut his way through to the Rio Grande, he met with a party of the enemy's cavalry, fifteen hundred strong, and was repulsed with a loss of nine men.

On the receipt of this intelligence General Taylor made immediate preparations to go to the relief of Point Isabel to open the communication between the two posts, to bring up the trains of provisions and stores then waiting at the depot, and to fight the enemy wherever he might meet him. Leaving the fort in command of Major Jacob Brown with the Seventh Infantry and two companies of artillery commanded by Capt. Lownd and Lieut. Bragg, making an effective force of about three hundred men, on the 1st of May General Taylor with a force of about two thousand men moved forward for Point Isabel, which place he reached on the evening of the second day, without having seen anything of the enemy.

As was anticipated the Mexicans took advantage of the departure of the main body of Americans.

Sunday morning, May 3d, at daylight, they opened on the fort a fire from a seven-gun battery stationed on the outskirts of Matamoros.

The bombardment of Fort Brown was continued each day; and Gen. Taylor having heard the signal guns at Point Isabel, started Thursday, May 7th, with 2100 men and a provision train for Fort Brown. The Mexican army, about 7000 strong, had in the mean time crossed the Rio Grande and encamped at Palo Alto about 7 miles from Point Isabel, and between Fort Brown and Gen. Taylor's army. About noon of the second day's march the Mexican army were discovered drawn up in order of battle.

At 2 o'clock the American army advanced to meet the enemy. The battle lasted about two hours. The Mexicans were driven from their position, but rallied and at 5 o'clock of the same afternoon the second fight commenced, which resulted in the route of the Mexican army. Night closed the battle and the American army encamped on the battle field.

The action lasted about five hours, and there were engaged in it on the side of the Americans 2223, of whom one hundred and seventy-seven were officers. The strength of the enemy, according to the report of their

own officers, taken prisoners next day, was at least six thousand regulars, and an unknown number of irregular troops, with twelve pieces of artillery. Their loss was nearly four hundred killed and wounded, while of the Americans only four men were killed, thirty-seven men wounded, and three officers wounded; of the latter Ringgold and Page mortally, and Lieut. Luther slightly.

On the morning of the 9th May, the Mexican army having fallen back to a place called Resaca de Palma, the American army advanced to meet them. At three o'clock the battle commenced. Both armies fought with bravery and for a long time it was doubtful which army would triumph, but a splendid charge made by a company of dragoons under command of Capt. May, won the field and the Mexican army were completely routed and fled precipitately. Large numbers of the Mexicans were drowned in crossing the Rio Grande.

The number of Mexicans engaged in this battle could not have been less than seven thousand. Their loss was very great. More than two hundred of their dead were buried by the army of General Taylor next day.—A large number of prisoners were taken, including fourteen officers, eight pieces of artillery, six hundred mules, upwards of one thousand small arms, and all their drums, nearly five hundred splendid pack saddles, several standards, and General Arista's papers, private property, and tent-equipage.

The marching force of General Taylor was 2222, including one hundred and seventy-three officers. The actual number engaged in the battle did not exceed 1700. His loss was three officers killed, Lieuts. Inge, Chadbourne and Cochrane, and twelve officers wounded; thirty-six privates killed, and seventy-one wounded.

On the 11th of May an exchange of prisoners was effected, and Gen. Taylor again set out for Point Isabel, where he had an interview with Com. Conner, and planned an expedition, consisting of volunteer sailors and marines to take possession of a small town called Barita, situated on the west side of the river below Matamoros. This expedition under the command of Capt. Gregory proved successful. Gen. Taylor again returned to Fort Brown, and on the 17th of May the town of Matamoros was surrendered unconditionally by the Mexicans.

When the news of these events reached Washington the President immediately dispatched a message to Congress, recommending a recognition of the war; and Congress, after an anxious deliberation of two days, passed the War Act of the 13th of May, 1846—with a preamble asserting that "war exists by the act of Mexico"—which appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry on the war, and authorized the President to accept the services of fifty thousand volunteers. Public meetings were held throughout the country to sustain the administration, and within a few weeks the services of no less than two hundred thousand volunteers were offered to the President of the United States.

From the want of supplies and the means of transportation Gen. Taylor was obliged to remain at this post the greater part of the summer.

Towards the end of August, Gen. Worth was ordered to advance to Seralvo and there to await further orders. From this post, on the 5th of September, he sent back advices to General Taylor that Monterey had been fortified and reinforced by three thousand men under Ampudia; thus increasing the garrison to five thousand men. This information determined General Taylor to advance at once on Monterey, without waiting for further reinforcements. He therefore marched from Matamoros on the 7th of September, and on the 19th, with six thousand six hundred troops encamped at the Walnut Springs under the walls of Monterey, then strongly fortified by nature and by art, and in addition to a force of armed citizens, was garrisoned by an army of ten thousand men.

After a siege of four days articles of capitulation were signed the 24th of September by General Scott and Ampudia.

By the terms of the capitulation it was agreed that Ampudia should surrender the city, the guns, ammunition, and all public property into the hands of the American general; that the Mexican army should be allowed to retire with their arms and accoutrements, six field-pieces, and twenty-one rounds of ammunition for the same. An armistice was also agreed upon to continue for eight weeks, or until instructions of the respective governments could be received.

The American loss in this engagement, was four hundred and eighty-eight killed and wounded; of officers, twelve killed, and thirty were mortally wounded; of men, one hundred and eight killed, and three hundred and thirty-seven wounded. Of the wounded several subsequently died. The Mexican loss is not known, but has been estimated at upwards of one thousand in killed and wounded.

News of the armistice having reached

Washington, the Secretary of War, in a communication of the 13th October to Gen. Taylor, ordered it to be terminated. This letter reached General Taylor on the 2d November, who notified Ampudia that the armistice would terminate on the 13th November, only six days before the expiration agreed upon by the convention.